

Message Text

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ACTION SS-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SPC-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6917

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ESTC, ETRD, BEXP, RO

SUBJECT: US HELICOPTERS AND MANUFACTURING

REF: BUCHAREST 4001

1. IN MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, SIKORSKY REPS GARTSU AND ROBBINS ARRIVED BUCHAREST TO BE ON HAND DURING GOR DECISION-MAKING STAGE. WE DISCUSSED POSSIBILITY OF MODIFYING SIKORSKY PROPOSAL IN PROBLEM AREAS POINTED OUT IN REFTEL IN ORDER TO IMPROVE US POSITION WITH RESPECT TO FRENCH. SIKORSKY REPS INDICATED THEY ARE PREPARED TO MAKE SOME IMPROVEMENTS IN DOWN PAYMENT AND IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TERMS OF CONTRACT. WE ALSO ARRANGED MEETING WITH ISPAS FOR SIKORSKY REPS TO DISCUSS MANUFACTURING OFFSET PACKAGE.

2. GOR SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF ON NOVEMBER 7 THAT DEPUTY MINISTER MIHULECEA FROM MINISTRY OF MACHINE TOOLS AND ELECTROTECHNOLOGY (RESPONSIBLE FOR AVIATION INDUSTRY) WOULD TRAVEL TO US IN MID-NOVEMBER AND WOULD BE ABLE TO WORK OUT FINAL DETAILS OF CONTRACT SO THAT IT COULD BE READY FOR SIGNING IN EARLY DECEMBER DURING CEAUSESCU VISIT.

3. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENT, GARTSU AND ROBBINS RELATED DISCUSSIONS THEY HELD WITH OFFICIALS AT ROMANIAN COMMERCIAL OFFICE IN NEW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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YORK WHEN GOR OFFICIALS ASKED SIKORSKY REPS IF US FIRM WILLING

TO RECEIVE "VERY HIGH ROMANIAN OFFICIAL" (READ CEAUSESCU) FOR
PLANT VISIT IN EARLY DECEMBER.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE OPTIMISTIC FLAVOR IN THESE DEVELOPMENTS,
OUR EXPERIENCE HERE LEADS US TO EXPECT LAST MINUTE PROBLEMS
OR EVEN POSSIBLE REVERSALS UP TO POINT OF SIGNING CONTRACT.
NEVERTHELESS WE WISH TO FOLLOW UP EVERY OPPORTUNITY ON THIS
IMPORTANT CONTRACT AND ACCORDINGLY WOULD PROPOSE TO SUGGEST
POSSIBLE VISIT TO SIKORSKY PLANT AT STRATFORD, CONNECTICUT DURING
CEAUSESCU'S VISIT TO THAT AREA (FOR PRATT AND WHITNEY VISIT),
DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO MAKE SIMILAR SUGGESTION TO ROMANIAN EMBASSY.
WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT GOR WILL COMMIT ITSELF ON SUCH A VISIT UNTIL
NEGOTIATIONS CLOSED IN ORDER TO EXTRACT MAXIMUM CONCESSIONS FROM
SIKORSKY. ON SPECULATIVE BASIS, WE WONDER WHETHER FACT THAT
CONNECTICUT IS ON ITINERARY AND SEATTLE NOT MEANS THAT WE WILL
GET HELICOPTER CONTRACT BUT WILL LOSE MEDIUM RANGE AIRCRAFT
CONTRACT TO BAC (UK DESK OFFICER GUSTEA NOTED LAST NIGHT TO
CHARGE THAT BAC HAD ADVANTAGE OF ARGUMENT THAT IT WAS PRACTICAL
TO CONTINUE WITH ALREADY ESTABLISHED AIRCRAFT - ALTHOUGH HE WAS
CAREFUL TO AGREE THAT COMPETITION STILL OPEN).
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